

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control (administration) system for controlling multiple game playing satellite computers on a network comprising:

(a) providing a mission control computer which operates administrative programs for performing administrative functions for multiple game playing satellite computers on a network;

(b) providing a plurality of game-playing satellite computers connected to the network, each of which maintains a plurality of game programs and game-specific command sets for controlling the play of respective ones of said plurality of game programs;

(c) storing in each game-specific command set of a satellite computer at least a game-specific start signal and a game-specific stop signal for starting and stopping a respective game program, respectively, on the satellite computer;

(d) issuing a generic game start signal from the mission control computer to a satellite computer which is indexed to the game-specific start signal of the game-specific command set for a respective game program on the satellite computer in order to cause the game-specific start signal of the game-specific command set to be issued by the satellite computer for starting the game program;

(e) enabling the game program once started to be played on the satellite computer by local game-specific command inputs of a game player to the satellite computer; and

whereby generic command signals can be issued by the mission control computer to control the administration of game programs played on any of the satellite computers, while enabling local game-specific command inputs to be used by a game player to control the playing of a game program on the satellite computer.

17. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 16, further comprising generating with the playing of each game program on a satellite computer one or more of the following sources of information for tracking the operation of the game program, and parsing said source of information for desired status information and providing it to the mission control computer: game log files; dialog boxes or

windows opened by the game program; messages from the Notification API; and a method used by the game program for external communications.

18. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 16, further comprising providing each satellite computer a local control program and a database of game-specific command sets for each of the game programs offered on the satellite computer, such that when a generic game-start signal is issued by the mission control computer to the satellite computer, the local control program of the satellite computer loads the corresponding game-specific command set from its database to operate the game program.

19. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 16, wherein each game-specific command set contains game-specific control codes derived by analyzing each game program and determining its configuration for at least a game-specific start signal for the given game program.

20. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 17, wherein said mission control computer maintains a database of game data based upon status information provided by the satellite computers, and generates one or more administrative reports from the group consisting of: system-wide gaming reports; membership and player statistics; detailed statistics on specific games played by specific players; current status of the system, hardware, and software troubleshooting.

21. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 16, wherein a plurality of mission control computers are maintained at respective mission control sites and are connected via a network to a network server that provides an online interface to the mission control computers for remote access by players.

22. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 21, wherein said online interface of said network server allows players to perform one or more activities of the group consisting of: looking up statistics for game programs they have played; seeing the status of game programs being played by other players;

seeing statistics for comparison to game programs played at other mission control sites; downloading statistics for their own later use; maintaining their accounts; joining or maintaining their status with a group of players; and communicating with other players.

23. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 17, wherein each satellite computer generates a log file for tracking the operation of a game program, and parses the log file for predetermined keywords indicative of desired status information and provides the status information to the mission control computer.

24. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 19, wherein the game-specific control codes for the game-specific command set for a game program are configured based upon one of the group of game command architecture types consisting of: keystrokes; http commands; TCP/IP commands; writing files; control APIs; and serial communications protocols.

25. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a mission control system according to Claim 19, further comprising issuing a generic game stop signal from the mission control computer to the satellite computer indexed to the game-specific stop signal of the game-specific command set for the game program in order to cause the game-specific stop signal of the game-specific command set to be issued by the satellite computer for stopping the game program.